

# CPEC HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY STATEMENT

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*News from the*

## CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION

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## *Principles and Priorities for Addressing Budget Reductions to California Higher Education*

THE anticipated State budgetary reductions will impact the ability of California's public colleges and universities to provide high quality education opportunities to all eligible students. During this time of fiscal constraint and the prospect that State funding for higher education will be significantly reduced, the Commission recommends that the following principles and priorities guide California's public colleges and universities. Each of California's public colleges and universities should:

- ◆ Strive to provide as many students as possible with access to high quality educational programs and services;
- ◆ Strive to protect faculty and other staff that provide direct instructional activities to students;
- ◆ Propose increases in student fees as a last and final resort, and only after all other expenditure reduction options have been fully explored and implemented;
- ◆ Ensure that institutionally based student financial aid funding is adequately increased to cover any increases in student fees for all financially needy students;
- ◆ Recognize that undergraduate education is a higher priority than graduate and professional degree programs during times of fiscal constraint;
- ◆ Maintain efforts to increase the racial-ethnic diversity of students enrolled in the State's public colleges and universities such that their student populations better reflect the racial-ethnic composition of the State's total population;
- ◆ Maintain adequate course offerings and student support services to ensure that all students – but particularly undergraduate students — can in a timely manner succeed and complete their educational objectives; and
- ◆ Ensure that all California Community College students who seek to transfer at the upper-division level to the State's public universities are accommodated and provided with access to at least one of the State's public universities.

In addition, the Postsecondary Education Commission strongly encourages the Governor and Legislature to:

- ◆ Provide the maximum flexibility possible to the State's colleges and universities in determining the ways in which they will reduce their expenditures while maximizing the instructional and student support services they provide students;

- ♦ Acknowledge that mid-year cuts being made by the systems should not prejudice future budgets.
  - ♦ Recognize that each system is unique and action taken should be consistent with its primary missions;
  - ♦ Consider the potential for realizing savings and/or improving the delivery of services through greater intra and inter-segmental cooperation/collaboration;
  - ♦ Allow the revenue generated from any increases in student fees to remain within the system for meeting the needs of students; and
  - ♦ Provide sufficient funding for the State's Cal Grant Program to offset and fully cover any increase in student fees for financially needy Cal Grant recipients.
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## *Framework for Addressing Budget Reductions in Higher Education*

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To ensure that budgetary reductions are implemented in a manner that protects access and diversity to the greatest possible extent and treats all constituencies of the higher education community (including faculty, staff, and students) in a fair and equitable manner, the Postsecondary Education Commission recommends that the State and its higher education systems develop specific plans for addressing the anticipated budgetary reductions that adhere to the specific principles and priorities outlined above.

- ♦ In order to protect access, quality, and diversity and to keep any increases to student fees as gradual and moderate as reasonably possible, each of the public higher education systems should seek to identify and implement improvements in their operating efficiencies and to identify reductions in programs and services that are not related to core instructional activities. Reductions in all other areas of the institution should be fully explored prior to implementing any increases in student fees.
  - ♦ If student fees are to be increased, no more than one-third of the overall segmental budget reduction should be addressed through any increase in student fees.
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